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Some form of the Economic Development Board has been a part of Sonoma County since the late 1950s. If you wanted assistance from Ben in the early days of his 20-year tenure, your first task would be to find his office, which moved four times in the first 10 years before finding a home on College Avenue in Santa Rosa. His long-time friends particularly recall his small office on Cleveland Avenue piled with filing boxes that a visitor clambered over to reach his desk.

A wall of certificates and plaques now greets visitors to his office, including a Grand Prize for Excellence from the California Association of Economic Development; four Achievement Awards from the National Association of Counties; and six Innovation Awards from the National Association of Development Organizations.

Madam Speaker, we want to honor Ben Stone today for his 20 years of service to Sonoma County and the Economic Development Board. He has made many friends in the many communities he serves and is always willing to give a boost to new arrivals or make that important contact for someone who needs assistance. As Ben always says to others, we wish him many more "Onward and Upward" years at the Sonoma County Economic Development Board.

INTRODUCTION OF LOWER BRULE AND CROW CREEK TRIBAL COMPENSATION ACT

HON. STEPHANIE HERSETH

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Ms. HERSETH. Madam Speaker, today I am pleased to introduce the Lower Brule and Crow Creek Tribal Compensation Act. This bill would fully compensate the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe and the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe in South Dakota for the lands that they lost in the last century as a result of the federal government's construction of the massive dams on the main stem of the Missouri River.

The 1944 Flood Control Act cost these tribes much in terms of lost land. It also took an enormous toll on the people of both tribes and their economies. It is critically important that we seek to fully reimburse these tribes for the lands they lost.

The Lower Brule Sioux Tribe and the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe are both constituent bands of the Great Sioux Nation. Both border on the Missouri River in central South Dakota and are connected by the Big Bend Dam.

Congress created a trust fund for the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe in 1996, and a separate trust fund for the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe in 1997. These trust funds sought to compensate the tribes for the value of their land that is now permanently inundated as a result of the construction of the Big Bend Dam. Unfortunately, the compensation amounts between different but similarly situated tribes varied greatly along the Missouri River. The result was unfair and inadequate compensation trust funds for these tribes. This act is designed to create consistency among the affected tribes and to bring some long-overdue closure to two tribes whose best lands were inundated decades ago.

This legislation already has a history that spans multiple Congresses. An earlier version of this bill was reported by the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs in the 108th Congress and ultimately passed the Senate. In the 109th Congress it was amended in the Senate after further hearings and then reported. I am hopeful that the House will move quickly in the 110th to Congress to advance this important legislation.

Compensation for these tribes would mean an ability to actively work for the betterment of their communities. It would mean adequate roads and improved community facilities. It would mean better health care and newer schools. It would mean attracting commercial business and improving the local economy. Most importantly, it would mean a real chance for these tribes to provide future generations with the tools that so many of us take for granted.

I would ask all of my distinguished colleagues to support the Lower Brule and Crow Creek Tribal Compensation Act and work with me to enact legislation that would fairly and appropriately compensate members of the Lower Brule and Crow Creek Sioux Tribes. I ask you to do it because of the tremendous positive difference it would make in the lives of those affected—and because it is the right and fair thing to do.

HONORING BEN STONE OF SONOMA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I, along with my colleague Congresswoman LYNN WOOLSEY, rise today to honor Ben Stone, who recently completed 20 years of service as head of the Sonoma County Economic Development Board. Under Ben's quiet but dynamic leadership, the Economic Development Board (EDB) has successfully implemented programs that have more than met the mandate of the County Board of Supervisors to enhance economic development by concentrating on new and innovative programs that enable businesses to remain competitive in a changing economy.

Ben came to Sonoma County from the Seattle area where he had been a county administrator in Port Angeles, Washington, a consultant with Arthur Andersen & Co. and a Special Projects Director with Scafo Corporation. He graduated from Whitman College in Walla Walla and received his Masters of Public Ad-

ministration from the University of Washington in Seattle.

Ben tells the story that, after coming to Sonoma County, he was informed that a decision had been made to close the EDB. However, he commenced creating programs atypical of economic development, which bolstered the local economy, and, 20 years later, the EDB is thriving under his leadership.

With the help of a small staff and interns, Ben has developed a number of award-winning programs in concert with local private and public sectors. Many of these programs have been successfully transitioned to community-based organizations.

Among them are the Sonoma County Tourism Program, which served to increase tourism 31 percent; two technology groups (SofTech, a trade group, and the North Bay Technology Roundtable, a policy group); Youth Business Week; the Business Environmental Alliance; the North Bay World Trade Association; the Small Business Center now operated by Santa Rosa Junior College; a home-based business project; and a business crime prevention program. Ben's office still operates the Sonoma County Film Commission.

Ben also initiated a broad-based strategic planning process resulting in the formation of bachelors and master's degree programs in Engineering Science at Sonoma State University, a new cooperative agricultural marketing program, and an economic research program. An EDB forum, the Business Regulatory Roundtable, involving elected officials, regulatory agencies, and business executives to improve local regulatory processes, resulted in Northern California's first multi-agency Permit Assistance Center.

By creating the Economic Development Board Foundation, the EDB is able to support research projects, bring expert speakers to discuss aspects of the economy at local presentations twice annually, present an annual State of the County program, and recognize local business men and women at the annual Spirit of Sonoma County Awards program.

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